



## COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

December 17, 2009

The Community & Neighborhood Services Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on December 17, 2009 at 9:01 a.m.

### COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dina Higgins, Chairwoman  
Dennis Kavanaugh  
Dave Richins

### COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

### STAFF PRESENT

Donna Bronski  
Natalie Lewis

(Items on the agenda were discussed out of order, but for purposes of clarity will remain as listed on the agenda.)

#### 1. Items from citizens present.

Stephanie Wright, Co-chair of the West Mesa Community Alliance, addressed the Committee regarding sustainability issues and spoke in support of the Tree City USA designation. She suggested that the City utilize the effort to obtain the Tree City USA designation as a Legacy Project in conjunction with the State of Arizona's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, and she volunteered to participate in that effort.

Committeemember Kavanaugh noted that a Legacy project would generate substantial community involvement.

#### 2. Hear a presentation, discuss and make recommendations on existing and proposed sustainability programs.

Environmental and Sustainability Deputy Director Scott Bouchie addressed the Committee and displayed a PowerPoint presentation (**see Attachment 1**) to review sustainable initiatives. He noted that sustainability is an issue that crosses departmental lines within the City. Mr. Bouchie reported that the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation is planned for two fire stations currently under construction.

Committeemember Richins noted that there are less costly rating systems for green buildings other than LEED. He suggested that the focus should be on the fact that the City supports high performance buildings.

Chairwoman Higgins stated that she would like the City to consider other certifications.

Mr. Bouchie explained that the competitive grant guidelines for fire station construction funds included wording that the project "should consider LEED certification."

Chairwoman Higgins advised that at a meeting of the National League of Cities Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee, the verbiage in the policy statement was changed to "certification like LEED," which acknowledged that there are other certifications that could be chosen.

Mr. Bouchie said that the City of Mesa was one of the founders of the Sustainable Cities Network, which is a coalition of cities, towns and tribes in the Phoenix metropolitan area that works on sustainable initiatives, shares best management practices and coordinates efforts to solve regional problems. He reported on projects that will be funded with Federal stimulus funds (see page 3 of Attachment 1), and he outlined many of the City's recycling projects (see pages 4 and 5 of Attachment 1). Mr. Bouchie noted that Mesa is the first city in the Valley to collect prescription drugs as part of the Household Hazardous Waste Program, and he reported that 35 gallons of loose pills were collected at a recent hazardous waste collection event.

In response to a question from Committeemember Richins, Mr. Bouchie advised that two Mesa Police officers, who were present during the collection event, transferred the drugs to the Police Department's evidence facility for storage until the drugs can be incinerated along with other materials. He stated that the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has allowed the law enforcement agencies of municipalities with programs in place to address this issue.

Mr. Bouchie highlighted other City programs that are available to residents, such as the Grass to Xeriscape Rebate Program; Sustainability Outreach that includes savings tips, workshops, and "living green" books that are available at the Library. He said that the Zoning Code Update (see page 6 of Attachment 1) and future Land Use Plans such as the Central Mesa Plan and the Mesa Proving Grounds Community Plan encourage mixed use and energy efficient development.

Mr. Bouchie stated that Stimulus Funding was also available to enable an evaluation of the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code.

Responding to a question from Chairwoman Higgins regarding the current State ban on making changes to building codes, Mr. Bouchie advised that if the evaluation of the International Energy Conservation Code is positive and the Code is adopted by the Council, the earliest effective date would be July of 2011.

Development and Sustainability Department Director Christine Zielonka said that the International Energy Conservation Code is a new code that will require a substantial amount of discussion, education and training. She stated the opinion that the State's two-year moratorium on Building Code changes provides staff with sufficient time to evaluate the Code and educate personnel prior to presenting a proposal to the Council in 2011.

Mr. Bouchie said that residents are seeking ways to conserve energy and water on an individual basis. He noted that utilizing a clothesline to dry clothing can save a substantial amount of energy. He reported that although the City does not prohibit the use of clotheslines, many homeowners' associations (HOAs) have Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs) that prohibit the use of clotheslines.

In response to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Deputy City Attorney Donna Bronski said that the City may be able to pass an ordinance that supersedes an HOA's prohibition regarding clotheslines. She added that a question remains as to whether such an ordinance could be applied retroactively to existing HOA's.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the ordinance could encourage HOAs to modify their requirements; that a sample CC&R modification could be provided to the existing HOAs; and that existing HOAs could be offered a rebate on a utility charge to encourage them to allow clotheslines.

Mr. Bouchie continued the presentation by noting that the City of Mesa does not require a building permit for the installation of solar panels. He added that State law prohibits HOAs from having restrictions that prevent or hinder the installation of solar panels. Addressing the issue of water conservation, Mr. Bouchie outlined a number of sustainable practices (see page 9 of Attachment 1).

Responding to a question from Chairwoman Higgins, Mr. Bouchie said that staff is reviewing the Tucson ordinance regarding rainwater harvesting, and he reported that he attended a workshop on the Tucson program.

Committeemember Kavanaugh expressed support for the multi-disciplinary approach, and he noted that the initiatives are important for the community.

In response to comments by Committeemember Richins, Mr. Bouchie advised that staff is working with the Sustainable Cities Network. He noted that a Sustainable Cities workshop will be held during the first quarter of next year, and he added that the organization is being encouraged to hold the workshop in the City of Mesa.

Committeemember Richins noted that the initiatives presented did not include the integration of the transportation grid. He suggested that areas to be addressed include street ordinances that encourage walking and biking and reduce vehicle miles traveled. Committeemember Richins added that a sustainable transportation infrastructure model should be adopted that does not simply widen the streets to resolve traffic issues. He stated the opinion that sustainability is a part of quality of life.

Chairwoman Higgins expressed the opinion that the City of Mesa is a leader on many sustainability issues, and she added that Mesa is implementing the initiatives in a smarter manner than are other cities.

(A single motion addressing agenda items 2 and 3 is listed under agenda item 3 on page 4 of this document.)

3. Hear a presentation, discuss and make a recommendation on possible designation as a Tree City USA.

Mr. Bouchie continued the PowerPoint presentation (see pages 10 through 15 of Attachment 1) and noted that many members of the Council have expressed an interest in the City pursuing the Tree City USA designation. He noted that the City presently meets most of the criteria, and

he listed the benefits of the designation (see Page 11 of Attachment 1). Mr. Bouchie outlined the following requirements for the Tree City USA designation:

- A Community Forestry Program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita; the City of Mesa currently budgets \$2.77 per capita.
- Community Tree Ordinances or Plans; the City has the Desert Uplands, the Citrus Sub-area and Landscaping Standards plans that meet the requirement.
- An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation; the City would conduct community outreach and partner with local businesses and schools.
- A Tree Advisory Panel; the Panel would track expenditures for the annual report, develop standard tree care practices, and coordinate the Arbor Day celebration.

Mr. Bouchie advised that a Committee recommendation for approval would result in the application for the Tree City USA designation being presented to the full Council for approval, after which the application would be forwarded to the State Forester for approval and then on to the Arbor Day Foundation.

Committeemember Kavanaugh stated that Stephanie Wright and Tanya Collins of the West Mesa Community Alliance first proposed the Tree City USA designation in 2004, and he thanked them for continuing to promote the concept. He noted that there is public support for the proposal, and he added that the present Council has been receptive to the proposal.

Responding to a question from Committeemember Richins, Mr. Bouchie advised that the Tree City USA requirements reflect the local environment, and he cited the example of the Desert Uplands Plan, which addresses the preservation of local vegetation.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Committeemember Richins, to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendations regarding sustainability programs and Mesa's designation as a Tree City USA be approved.

Carried unanimously.

Chairwoman Higgins thanked Mr. Bouchie for the presentation.

#### 4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Community & Neighborhood Services Committee meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

In response to a request by a member of the audience (Stephanie Wright) who wished to address the Committee, Chairwoman Higgins reconvened the meeting at 9:35 a.m. under agenda item 1, "Items from citizens present" (see comments under agenda item 1).

Without objection, the Community & Neighborhood Services Committee meeting adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Community & Neighborhood Services Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2009. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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Attachment (1)